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Interview with Richard Helms
4 November 1983
by Dr. Robert M. Hathaway
Washington, DC

Hathaway: I'd like to start off, if we can, by first of all making the comment that everyone I've talked to has suggested that relations with Congress while you were DCI were very favorable, and they attribute a great deal of that to you, your role in this. I wonder if you could talk for a minute, how do you account for your success along these lines? Was there a particular Richard Helms approach or style or even philosophy?

Helms: Well, I had my own convictions about the way a Director had to deal with the Congress. In the first place, I made it a policy to go myself whenever a committee asked for a representative from the Agency. I felt this was important because senators and congressmen want to talk to the top man. They will obviously, on occasion, take substitutes, particularly if there is a good reason for the substitute. But in point of fact, they really want to talk to the Director of the Agency. I made myself available whenever I possibly could, and that was most of the time. Also I had been testifying in Congress before the oversight committees with other Directors, even as early as the days of Allen

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Dulles. I used to go to hearings, and I went with John McCone from time to time, and certainly with Adm. Raborn on occasion. So that I was a relatively well-known quantity to both senators and congressmen who dealt with Agency matters. And also, above all, I leveled with the Congress. I believed that they had a right to have a straight story. I gave them a straight story to the best of my ability in whatever category of activity they wanted to talk about. They in turn were very good to me because they never leaked on me, as far as I am aware. They were a very scrupulous and conscientious group of both senators and congressmen and I never had any difficulties with leaks. Therefore, I felt safe in sharing with them confidences and things about highly secret operations which I might not have felt comfortable about under other circumstances. I think that probably is as close to explaining if I had any successes, as anything I can think of.

Hathaway: Well, I think the consensus is you certainly did have some success. Can we talk in an abstract way for just a minute? How do you envision the proper relationship between Congress and the CIA? What should Congress' role be? What should the Agency's responsibilities be?

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Helms: Well, in an ideal world the oversight committee or nowadays, the Senate and House select committees, should provide the forum for the Director to present his case with respect to the kind of operations he's involved in, certainly his budget, what he needs the money for. And then certainly at least once a year or perhaps twice, there are certain specific intelligence matters that he should cover with these select committee, such as the state of the world, economic trends, the growth of Soviet strategic forces, the display of Soviet power around the world, and such matters. Now the key, in my opinion, to a proper relationship between the Agency and a congressional committee is that confidentiality be observed. I get the impression that the members of these select committees--if not the members themselves, then some members of the staffs--talk to newspapermen after the briefings. And there have been leaks. I think that is something that the Congress has got to tidy up, because if the Director cannot be sure of confidentiality, then it's going to be very difficult for him to play the proper role which they expect of him, which is to confide in them the things he is going to do. Last but not least, there come times when a Director is responsible for running some very sensitive operations, be they for

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acquisition of intelligence or be they covert actions of some variety. These are occasions on which the Director undoubtedly would like some impression or opinion from the congressmen as to the desirability of this--whether the objective is worthy, whether they as representatives of the people feel confident that this is an effort worth attempting. In short, and to put it in the side [?] of a familiar type of language, I think a Director from time to time would like to be able to hold hands with some senators and congressmen on something that is dicey and tricky and might fail. Also they from time to time can give a Director a little better feel for how the public may react to some specific operation, and that can be weighed in the balance when it's being considered whether the operation should go forward or not. But that is the kind of relationship that ought to exist between these two quite different entities. And I repeat again that if you don't have confidentiality, you're not going to have a proper relationship.

Hathaway: The phrase "shared responsibilities" came to my mind in listening to you describe this.

Helms: Well, that's all right. "Shared responsibilities" is not too bad a phrase.

Hathaway: What about the problem, and I think this was a problem from time to time, of senators and

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congressmen who are not members of the oversight committees--whether they're oversight subcommittees as in your day, or members of the select committee as there are today?

Helms: Well, this is one of the problems that will probably not go away. I'd like here to talk a little history. When I became Director, Senator Russell, who at that time was in charge of the oversight committee, wanted to have a hearing on my nomination even though I'd had a hearing to become Deputy Director only 14 months before. Senator Russell explained to me that he wanted to have another hearing "because the job you are about to occupy is so important and I think we should have it on the record that you were examined again for this responsibility." After the confirmation proceedings, which are a matter of public record, I then started meeting with his oversight committee, which was a combination of Armed Services and Appropriations. In other words, it had representatives from each and they met together. This was a very tidy arrangement for the Agency because it meant that one could testify just once before this group without having to testify another time to get the appropriation. But in any event, as I said a moment ago, they were very careful and there were no leaks, and this was very

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much in Sen. Russell's control. You will recall that Mr. Hayden in those days was chairman of Appropriations, and he sat as a member of this committee along with his Republican . . . and at that time the Republicans were in the minority so it would have been the minority member. That worked very well, but coming back to the point that you were making, it certainly cut out most of the Senate. And I think many of the senators felt edgy about this, felt they weren't kept properly advised about what the Agency was doing. But this system continued because Sen. Russell had such respect and power in the Senate that nobody wanted to challenge him.

When Sen. Russell died and Sen. Stennis took over as chairman of Armed Services, he did not use the same system. He wanted to set up a small group of Armed Services members to hear Agency problems, but he very seldom held any meetings because he and Sen.

Symington did not like each other. In fact, they did not like each other to the point where Sen. Stennis refused to give Sen. Symington the chairmanship of the Armed Services Preparedness Subcommittee, which Stennis had chaired, and he having moved up to the chairmanship of the whole committee, Sen. Symington in terms of seniority should have been given the Preparedness Subcommittee. But Stennis did not want

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him to have it. Sen. Symington was very much irritated--in fact, mad--about this, and he went around to Foreign Relations, where he was also a member, and got Sen. Fulbright (who was the chairman) to set up a Preparedness Subcommittee in Foreign Relations. It was from this position that Sen. Symington was able to carry out certain of the activities in which he was interested. Nevertheless, the bad blood between him and Sen. Stennis did not dissipate, and since Symington would have had to sit on any small subcommittee hearing intelligence people, there were very few meetings. Later on, this was very much criticized by the whole Senate, and particularly by the Democratic caucus. Sen. Jackson, who was on Armed Services, went to Sen. Stennis once, and maybe more than once, in an effort to get his permission to set up a tiny subcommittee inside Armed Services that would be chaired by Jackson in order to have more hearings about Agency affairs and about intelligence problems. But Sen. Stennis refused to permit Sen. Jackson to do that. So some years later, when there was a to-do about the Agency in Watergate and associated matters, Sen. Stennis was out-voted by the Democratic caucus, lost control of intelligence, and the so-called Church Committee took over for the investigation. I mention this history because it is

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not very well known why it was that the Senate held so few hearings in those years. In fact, I ran into Sen. Jacob Javits in Teheran when I was ambassador there, and one day in a private meeting in his hotel room he asked me why there had been this trouble in the Senate and why the Agency hadn't had more hearings and so forth. I explained these personality clashes to him and he professed to know nothing about them and expressed surprise that this was the case. But it is part of history, and an important part of history. . . . Where was, what was the . . . ?

Hathaway: I asked you about particular problems with members of the Congress who were not members of the subcommittee.

Helms: Yeah. So you can see what happened: that they felt, the rest of the Democrats even, who in those days controlled the Senate, that there hadn't been proper oversight of the Agency; that if there had been, they wouldn't have been doing some of the things that these gentlemen disapproved of. And therefore they took the power away for Stennis. I was aware even in Sen. Russell's day that this was a problem. I went to Sen. Russell once and mentioned that certain senators felt that they should know a little more about what the Agency was doing and so forth, and "should I go around and brief them?" Sen. Russell said flatly, "No." He said, "If you want my support

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and the support of my committee, you handle these matters with the Senate the way I want you to handle them. In other words, report to my committee and that will take care of it." So Sen. Russell wouldn't permit this even though I believed at the time that it would have been desirable to see if I couldn't develop a little bit more familiarity with some of these senators in terms of their being a constituency and so forth. But that didn't work.

Hathaway: In going back through some of the records I've seen, one sees that senators like Sen. Fulbright, Sen. Cooper are asking you for briefings, for NIEs, for other forms of intelligence. How did you handle these types of requests--again, if they were not members of . . . ?

Helms: Whenever I received a request from any other Senate committee to testify, I always went to Sen. Russell and asked if this would be satisfactory. On one occasion, Sen. Proxmire wanted me to testify before his Joint Economic Committee. I went to Sen. Russell and Sen. Russell said, "No, the Agency shouldn't be testifying before that committee. That's something for the State Department or the Commerce Department, but certainly not for the CIA. You just go back and tell Sen. Proxmire that you've talked to me about this and I don't think you ought to appear." So I

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did do that, and Sen. Proxmire didn't like it but he didn't object. In the case of Sen. Fulbright, from time to time he wanted intelligence briefings on the state of the world for the Foreign Relations Committee in executive session, and generally Sen. Russell figured that was satisfactory, and so I would go and testify before Sen. Fulbright. And certainly after Sen. Russell died, then Sen. Stennis really didn't have any view particularly, one way or another. So I appeared in those days with some regularity before Foreign Relations.

Hathaway: These would be formal briefings then?

Helms: They'd be formal briefings covering certain specific topics which they asked to have covered. It obviously became more and more a case of discussing what was happening in Vietnam as the years went by.

Hathaway: Well, that, of course, is a question I want to ask you in a few minutes. I want right now to give you a quote that I got from a document in OLC. It's out of context, it may mean nothing to you, but let me just try it on you. In 1969 Fulbright is meeting with you and brings up the question of access to NIEs. You say, according to this document--this is a quote now: "Mr. Helms explained the delicacy of his position and asked the senator not to get him in trouble." Without knowing the context, does that make any sense

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to you? Would you be getting in trouble with Sen. Russell?

Helms: No, I can understand why I said that: because it was a time in which the President would not have liked the NIEs given to members of Congress. And when I referred there to getting me in trouble, I was simply, it was a kind of euphemism for indicating to Fulbright that if he forced this, I was going to have to go to the President, and I didn't know how this was going to come out, and that my testimony-- certainly on strategic arms and so forth--reflected what was in the NIEs, and so they really didn't need to have the texts of them. I don't recall that Sen. Fulbright ever pressed the matter.

Hathaway: No, I think he did not, at least from what I've seen. I was curious, then, whether that was reflecting the President's desires, or Sen. Russell's. Now, was this just President Nixon, or did President Johnson also have this?

Helms: No, President Johnson . . . there was a feeling in those years that there was no reason to pass these sensitive documents around in the Senate or in the House because they would be used for political purposes. They would be used in debates on the floor and things of that kind. I recall vividly that on one occasion Sen. Cooper wrote me a letter and at

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that time he had as one of his principal assistants the gentleman who later became chief of staff of the Church Committee, namely, Bill [Miller--some extraneous conversation trying to recall Miller's name]. In any event, I got this letter from Sen. Cooper asking for a reply and wanting some specific information about Soviet forces and Soviet force strengths and things of this kind. Since I thought it was desirable to answer senatorial mail, I had an answer drafted, responsive to this letter. When it was finished, I had George Cary or one of the OLC people take it down and show it to Sen. Russell before I sent it. The next thing I knew, I had a frantic telephone call saying Sen. Russell wanted to see me right away. So I jumped in the car and went down to the Senate. He came off the floor, and he said, "Don't you ever send a letter like that to Sen. Cooper or anybody else." He said, "They'll simply take that letter, come on the floor of the Senate, wave it, and say 'I've got a letter from the Director of Central Intelligence and it says so-and-so,' and it will adversely affect the debate we're having on the floor right now. As a matter of fact, it may affect the whole budget for the Defense Department. You shouldn't even consider writing letters like that." He was really very shirty about it. I said,

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"What do you want me to do?" He said, "Well, you just go and see Sen. Cooper and tell him you aren't in a position to provide information like that in writing. If he wants to hear it, he can come and sit in on one of the committee meetings we have." So I did have to go back to Sen. Cooper. Sen. Cooper was very gracious and gentlemanly about it, and in effect said, "Well, I just thought I'd try." In other words, he didn't seem to mind being turned down. It was a good shot and he didn't lose anything by not getting a reply back. But I learned my lesson that documents of that kind could affect debates, could be very important, and that the Director had to be very careful about who he wrote to and when he did it and so forth.

Hathaway: That's very revealing, and it ties into another question I was wondering about: How do you keep the Agency from being drawn into these controversies that pertain in one way or another to intelligence matters? Vietnam is a good example.

Helms: I don't know that one really does. If what I read in the papers is anywhere accurate at all these days, it seems to me that the Agency does an awful lot of testifying on Capitol Hill that we never did in my time. They testify before a lot more committees than they ever testified before in the past. A lot more

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people go up there, so I don't know how it is today. But in my time the control of this was kept by strong senators or by at least a system of testifying just before certain committees where the information was laid out, and that was all there was to it and other people weren't to have access to it unless they went to that committee.

Hathaway: So you really do need the active collaboration or cooperation of those key senators?

Helms: There's no question about it. Without that you get nowhere.

Hathaway: I've noticed in talking with you, and in talking with the others, other people--when you talk about Congress, you primarily focus on the Senate. Is it fair to say that the House and congressmen in the House are considerably less important for CIA?

Helms: No, I wouldn't say that. As a matter of fact, the House is more important because after all, all money bills originate in the House, and that applies to the bill which encompasses the Agency's budget. So the House Appropriations Subcommittee was a very important factor in the life of the Agency. The Senate was of almost no significance when it came to appropriations. They tended to go along with the House, and we didn't have very much difficulty with the Senate on appropriations. The House, in my time,

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handled Agency matters very carefully and very discreetly. There were no leaks from the House. George Mahon, who was chairman of Appropriations, also chaired the subcommittee that handled the Agency's budget because he knew how sensitive Agency affairs were and he wanted to handle it himself. It was a very small committee. [Interruption]

George Mahon had a very small subcommittee to hear ^{on} Agency matters. It had on it two other Democrats and two Republicans. Sometimes even all five weren't there, sometimes there were only three or four of them. But they were very senior members of the Appropriations Committee. They were entirely discreet. We had our meetings in the basement of the Capitol building in a secret room. We went over the budget line by line in great detail so that those congressmen were fully apprised every year of what was in the CIA budget and what it was for. I held nothing back from that committee, and allegations in the press and elsewhere that the CIA budget was so secret that the congressmen were not told what was in it is poppycock. It's simply untrue. We answered all their questions. We volunteered everything we thought was in any way relevant, including the most sensitive operations that we were performing. I want it on the record that at least during my time as

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Director, we were forthright and wholly forthcoming with the House Appropriations Subcommittee.

The House Armed Services Committee, before which we also testified, held reasonably regular hearings.

They had a lot of things they were interested in--Vietnam, Soviet strategic forces, a whole series of substantive intelligence matters. They didn't bother much about intelligence operations; they didn't seem to be all that much interested or didn't want to take, I guess, their time on it. But they were attentive, they were careful, and they too were very careful about leaks. So our relationship with the House throughout my time was quite satisfactory. We were forthcoming and honest, and I think for that reason the House did not feel as, for some reason as . . . well, I don't know exactly what word to use because it was after I left the Agency and went to Iran that all this business erupted about taking control of the Senate away from Sen. Stennis and giving it to a select committee and so forth. This revolt did not occur in the House. The House seemed reasonably satisfied with the way Agency matters were handled, and if they were not satisfied, if individual members didn't like the way it was being done, there was nothing very much they could seem to do about it because the Armed Services Committee was

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a powerful committee. Its members all had access to, or at least a good chunk of them had access to Agency material. And when I say "a good chunk," I don't want to be cavalier. This was a subcommittee that the chairman set up to hear Agency matters, but there were certainly at least--well, the number varied but there must have been at least anywhere between 10 and a dozen House members sitting on that committee, or subcommittee, perhaps you would want to call it. The record would show all that.

Hathaway: Yes, it does. You mentioned Mahon. Any other names for historical purposes you would want to mention on the House side?

Helms: Well, Mendel Rivers was the chairman of the House Armed Services. Later, it was Eddie Hebert of Louisiana. I believe those were the two that were in the chair during the time that I was the Director. If I am wrong, I wish you'd straighten me out, but I think those were the two. I don't remember right now--I could if I went back in my memory and remember some of the other members of the committee. But I do remember that, for instance, Mahon had . . . Congressman Andrews was on the subcommittee; Congressman Whitten, who is now chairman of Appropriations in the year 1983, was also on that subcommittee. The Republican members change from time to time, but I

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remember Laird was on there at one time. That may have been before my time--I think it was, as a matter of fact. No, I guess Laird was on there when I first became Director in the Johnson administration. Ford, Jerry Ford was on that committee at one time. A Congressman from Ohio named . . . not Malard but . . . well, you'd have to look that up. I'm sure it's in the record. It was a congressman from Cleveland, Ohio. Another Republican and then he didn't run for office, and someone else came along. But in any event . . .

Hathaway: These are all names that you considered friends of the Agency?

Helms: Yes, and they did a good job of working on the budget and so forth.

Hathaway: Did you have any dealings, or many dealings with Congressman Nedzi, Lou Nedzi?

Helms: Yes. My dealings with Nedzi were in the context of his sitting on the Armed Services Committee, and there was a time, it seems to me, toward the end of . . . I'm just trying to remember now--was it after I left the Agency that I . . . there was some kind of a dust-up involving Nedzi.

Hathaway: In '71 Eddie Hebert names Nedzi to head the CIA subcommittee in Armed Services. Now I am not certain yet exactly how active that subcommittee was during the remainder of your time.

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Helms: My recollection is that it was active. What I was trying to think about was there came a time when there was a report made by that subcommittee, I think it was that subcommittee, that was critical of me and the Agency. I'm trying to remember what this was about and whether it was while I was still Director or whether it came out after I had left, because I recall going to see Nedzi and saying that I wasn't . . . and discussing the report with him. Do you remember what the subject matter of it was, what this issue was?

Hathaway: Is that the report that says something like "the DCI should have independent standing"?

Helms: No, no.

Hathaway: No, I don't remember because as you say, it's beyond my chronological period so I haven't really gone into that.

Helms: Well, you can ask me some other time about it. Nedzi is still in town, I mean he's a lawyer here now. I see him on the street every once in a while. You can always interview him if you want to. . . . I liked Nedzi, I thought he was forthright and honest and a hard worker.

Hathaway: Let me switch subjects. You are confirmed as DCI in the middle of 1966. Within just a few months you take, you create a separate OLC, take it out of the

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General Counsel's office and create a separate office. Do you have any recollections of the circumstances behind that? I'm interested in your thinking: did this come from you? did it come from John Warner? was there a sense that . . . ?

Helms: No, I know what happened. Senator Stennis, having become chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee, took me aside one day and said that he didn't think that in the modern time--in other words, in the context of that particular period--that John Warner was up to the job of being Legislative Counsel. I never told John Warner that. I simply, it was necessary for me to obviously get somebody who was more to Senator Stennis' liking. Because I could have insisted on keeping Warner, but having been in a friendly fashion advised that the chairman did not think that he measured up, I was . . . only prudence made . . . and it made sense to get somebody else. So it was then that I put on my one-man search--namely, I was the one doing the searching--and decided that Jack Maury would be a good man to take over Legislative Liaison. For several reasons: one, that he had had experience in the DDP; also he had had experience in the DDI; he had served overseas; he had been with the Agency a long time; and last but not least, he had gone to the University of Virginia,

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where Sen. Stennis had gone to study law. Therefore, he had good southern connections, and I felt would be personally favorably regarded by Sen. Stennis, which turned out to be the case. I don't remember whether I set up a separate OLC at the time that Maury was appointed, or whether I had done it before that.

Hathaway: You had done it before. Maury was appointed in '68.

Helms: I don't remember specifically what triggered that, then, my separating the Legislative Liaison from the General Counsel's office. Except that as I sit here now, it was a move that made sense to me because it was no reason why it should be a member of the General Counsel's office. It ought to be headed by a man who would report directly to me rather than through the General Counsel. It just seemed to be an organizational, to make much more sense organizationally. Because I was a believer in the fact that congressional relations, relations with the press and the outside world were something that were the Director's peculiar responsibilities since there was nobody else in the Agency to make those close judgments about these matters and the relationships of the Agency with the press, with the Congress, and so forth. So I wanted those people reporting directly to me.

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Hathaway: We were talking about creation of OLC. Let me change tacts just for a little bit. Is it possible for you to describe how you used OLC?

Helms: Well, I expected Maury or whoever it was to make the rounds on Capitol Hill, to arrange the committee briefings when the committees wanted to be briefed, subject matter . . .

[interruption]

Hathaway: We were talking about how you utilized OLC.

Helms: I regarded OLC or Jack Maury or whoever was the head of it as my eyes and ears on Capitol Hill. I expected him to make the rounds up there. I expected him to arrange for briefings, find out what the subject matter of the briefing was to be, to service requests from senators and congressmen that were within reason. If the requests were something we couldn't handle, I expected him to come to me so we could talk it over and decide what the answer would be. In short, as I said at the outset, they were to be my eyes and ears of Congress.

Hathaway: Would you meet with the Legislative Counsel on a daily basis?

Helms: No, I didn't meet on a daily basis. But he was, he attended the morning staff meeting--we had a staff meeting every morning at nine o'clock. I had around the table all the people that I thought should be in

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a position to report to me and let me know what was going on in the Agency or in town or in the world, if you want to look at it that way, and the Legislative Counsel was one of the few people there. So every morning he had an opportunity to report to me what was going on on Capitol Hill and ask me questions if he wanted to. And seek a separate session with me personally if that was desirable. In other words, he had daily access. All these fellows had daily access. I regard that as a very important factor in attempting to handle the Agency's affairs, because it gave them a chance to talk to me and me to talk to them at least once a day.

Hathaway: Good. Something that I think is very important that I haven't been able to get a handle on: I think the notion of partnership or collaboration is a useful notion in describing the Agency-congressional relationship during your term, during your time. Do you agree with that?

Helms: I would, yes.

Hathaway; I think any number of people, including yourself this morning, have given me illustrations where this collaborative relationship served the Agency, worked to the benefit of the Agency. I'd like to do the opposite side. What services did the Agency provide to Congress? Specifically, were there episodes where

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intelligence from the Agency played an important role in congressional action, or congressional decisions?

Helms: Well, there's no question about the fact that the annual briefings on Soviet strategic forces, Soviet conventional forces, and matters of this kind were absolutely basic to the Congress' understanding of what the Russians had in the military sense, and what therefore our Defense Department was going to have to have in an effort to confront this Soviet force which was every year growing in size. When Vietnam came along, the briefings about how the Vietnamese war was going, by the Agency, I think were the most objective that Congress received. I remember that Sen. Fulbright, Sen. Gore, various senators saying that they thought the Agency's picture of the war, what was happening in the war and so forth, was the most objective that they received. So in all of these ways, the Agency provided information which these senators and congressmen had to have to do their job.

Hathaway: Do you remember any particular role Agency intelligence played in the decision to ratify the SALT I agreement in '72?

Helms: Well, the Agency had the leading role in the whole verification problem. There was no doubt that when I went before the Senate and the House and assured them that within reasonable limits the Agency and the

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intelligence community could verify the SALT I treaty, that's the only reason it got passed. That was generally recognized. President Nixon knew that. He used to say at the National Security Council meetings that if you can't verify the treaty, I can't get it through the Congress. I was the spokesman there for the community and their ability to verify at least the key provisions of the treaty. One of the things that the Nixon administration did that was very intelligent in my opinion was that each major element in the SALT proposal, as it was being negotiated, was checked out beforehand in terms of "could it be verified or could it not be verified?" So this is a matter that was faced early on rather than later on.

Hathaway: So it's not an exaggeration to say that it was congressional, or Senate, confidence in your capabilities, in the Agency's capabilities, which allowed them to ratify.

Helms: That's correct.

Hathaway: Fine. I know we are running out of time. Let me touch a couple of other things. Did the switch from President Johnson to President Nixon in any way affect your dealings with Congress?

Helms: No. Both of those gentlemen had been senators themselves. I often thought that both of them,

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because they had been senators, missed a point when they became President, which was that having always been in the driver's seat--in other words, a senator themselves--they did not look at the job of the executive in testifying before Senate committees through the same eyes that those of us who had to do the testifying did. So they frequently would say, "well, why pay attention to that senator?" or "why do this?" or "why do that?" when if you looked at it from the standpoint of the man who had to do the testifying, one could not afford to alienate this senator or that senator. So I never thought that either Johnson or Nixon was properly appreciative of what it was like for their appointees to testify before congressional committees. But that wasn't an important factor. They both recognized the role of the Congress and the Senate, and they were both just about the same as far as their attitudes were concerned. In other words, to answer your question directly, I didn't notice much change from one to the other.

Hathaway: Do you remember ever discussing this question of dealing with Congress with either of them?

Helms: Oh, yes, I think I spoke on occasion. Something would come up that I had some reason to mention these things with one or the other. But we resolved the

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matter very quickly, and it was never any great, any abiding importance or on-going importance.

Hathaway: What about legislation? CIA does not need much legislation during your period. Do you remember getting personally involved?

Helms: We didn't put through any legislation of a major variety, I don't believe, when I was Director. I think the legislation which set the retirement age at 60 and got special benefits for the operators and so forth was something that got through just before I became Director. If I recall it, I think it was got through in the days of John McCone.

Hathaway: Well, we've run out of tape, and of time. Thank you, Mr. Helms.

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